

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1878

THE ZOOLOGICAL RECORD

The Zoological Record for 1876; being Volume Thirteenth of the Record of Zoological Literature. Edited by Edward Caldwell Rye, F.Z.S., &c. (London: 1878.)

ANOTHER volume of this useful annual is now before us. When, about a twelvemonth since, we noticed (*NATURE*, vol. xvi. p. 357) its predecessor, we took occasion to complain of the ingratitude of zoologists in not giving more efficient support to a work which, if not indispensable to the due prosecution of their studies, would at least lighten their labours in a remarkable degree, and we pointed out how it was a matter of obligation upon all literary and scientific institutions to include the *Zoological Record* among the books they regularly purchase. We fear that our words fell upon dull ears, and that there is as much need now as there was then to impress these considerations on the public. The Zoological Record Association, to judge from its recent balance-sheet, still lives upon charity, to the great discredit of the zoologists of our own tongue as a body, and if its existence be prematurely brought to a close, it will be to their everlasting disgrace. In some respects the energy of zoologists is boundless, in other respects their apathy is amazing. They will compass sea and land to gain one new specimen for their collections, or one apparently new species for their monographs. They think themselves happy in the short-lived glory of being able to inscribe "*Nobis*" or "*In Mus. nostr.*" after its name in some printed list; but they care very little to know what others are doing in the same line of research, and when a few years after, some industrious German or Scandinavian naturalist quietly relegates the name on which they had plumed themselves to the limbo of synonyms (perhaps with a mark of admiration which does not mean praise), they accept the rebuff and console themselves with the reflection that "a fellow can't be expected to know everything," or, if twitted by a friend, will ask in an aggrieved tone whether it is possible for anybody to be acquainted with the contents of two hundred foreign journals. Then, again, there is the obstacle caused by dislike to, or suspicion of, any new thing, from which even scientific men are not entirely exempt. The conchological investigations of Mr. A. or the entomological studies of Dr. B., some thirty or forty years ago, conferred imperishable renown upon the ancient borough of Little Pedlington, in which they were both resident. Their investigations and their studies were accomplished without the aid of the *Zoological Record*. Therefore the *Zoological Record* is of no use to persons engaged in such labours, and therefore the Little Pedlington Literary and Scientific Institute need not go to the expense of adding the yearly volumes of the *Zoological Record* to its bookshelves. Perhaps some of our readers may smile, but we believe this to be no uncommon case, and though the sight of a just man struggling with adversity is said to have been pleasant to the gods of old times, we cannot say that the condition of the Zoological Record Association awakens similar feelings in ourselves.

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Now as to the present volume. With the same contributors as the last, it has naturally almost the same qualities; but the editor has introduced a new feature in the separate pagination of many of the records. This scheme has been tried, he tells us, in the hope of saving time, but the very insignificant amount of delay which it seems to have avoided, appears to us but a poor and utterly inadequate recompense for the additional trouble there always is in citing a book so paged, and the amount of confusion to which this manifold system invariably gives rise. Here we have page 1 fifteen times over, and yet one set of numbers runs to 240 pages! We certainly trust the editor will reconsider his determination of continuing this practice, though he holds out hope of its "possibly leading to other improvements." Otherwise we have not a word to say against Mr. Rye's management, which, as before, proclaims his great ability. We venture, however, to throw out a suggestion that perhaps may not be included among his possible improvements. This is that *general* works should receive a separate notice in addition to that which each individual recorder thinks fit to give them. The year 1876 will long be remarkable as that in which Mr. Wallace's great work on the "Geographical Distribution of Animals," appeared; but we must say that the attention it receives in this volume of the *Zoological Record* is utterly unworthy of the magnitude of the subject. Our readers shall judge for themselves. The recorder for *Mammalia*, Mr. Alston, after most properly naming it especially in his preliminary remarks, says of it:—

"A considerable part of this most important work is devoted to the *Mammalia*. Besides the discussion of the genera characteristic of each of the zoological regions and sub-regions, the classification of *Mammals* is considered (i. pp. 85-90), the distribution of the extinct forms (i. pp. 107-160), and that of existing families and genera (ii. pp. 170-254). The author believes that the principal groups first appeared in the northern hemisphere, from which the southern continents were peopled by successive waves of migration."

The recorder for *Aves*, Mr. Salvin, writes:—

"The class *Aves* supplies a large proportion of the material investigated in this work, and the distribution of birds entering into the subjects is examined under the following heads:—(Part i.) The principles and general phenomena of animals. (Part ii.) On the distribution of extinct animals. (Part iii.) Zoological Geography: a review of the chief forms of life in the several regions and sub-regions, with the indications they afford of geographical mutations. (Part iv.) Geographical Zoology: a systematic sketch of the chief families of land animals in their geographical relations. The book itself is full of details most carefully elaborated, and is doubtless destined to be the standard work on the subject for some time to come."

The recorder for *Reptilia*, Mr. O'Shaughnessy, descants at greater length:—

"The geographical distribution of the families and genera of *Reptiles* and *Amphibians* is treated collectively as a section, in chap. xix. of this work, vol. ii. pp. 392-423.

"In discussing the means of Dispersal and Migration of the various classes of animals, Mr. Wallace remarks (vol. i. p. 29) that *Reptiles*, exclusive of serpents and sea-snakes, being scarcely more fitted than *Mammals* for traversing seas and oceans, are generally wanting in

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oceanic islands which possess no indigenous Mammals; this rule is, however, subject to exceptions among the lizards, which apparently have some unknown way of passing over the ocean (probably in the egg state), as they are found to inhabit many islands where there are neither Mammals nor snakes. Snakes entirely cease at 60° N. lat., and at 6,000 feet elevation in the Alps. Lizards, though essentially tropical, go sometimes farther north than snakes, and ascend higher, reaching 10,000 feet in the Alps. Amphibians extend much farther north; Frogs to within the Arctic circle; their eggs are no doubt carried certain distances by aquatic birds, but salt water is fatal to them, and deserts and oceans constitute the most effectual barriers to their dispersal.

"Further remarks on the possible mode of transport of Reptiles to remote distances are made, vol. i. pp. 400-401, where the author treats of the points of similarity between the fauna of the Australian region and that of South America.

"Describing first in detail the faunæ of the six great geographical regions (Neotropical, Nearctic, Palæarctic, Ethiopian, Oriental, and Australian), the author refers successively to the Reptiles in their subordinate relation to each fauna, and afterwards, vol. ii. pp. 372-423, collects his results and tabulates them under the heads of the different families."

None of the other recorders seem to make mention of the work, except Dr. von Martens, who, under the head of *Mollusca*, contents himself with the following:—

"A. R. WALLACE gives an outline of the geographical distribution of the terrestrial (and freshwater) Mollusca in his 'Geographical Distribution of Animals,' vol. ii. pp. 512-529 and 534-535, and some instances of means for their passive dispersal, vol. i. p. 31."

Now we humbly submit that no adequate idea of Mr. Wallace's work is given by any one of these notices separately nor by all of them combined. As we said on the last occasion, we cannot find it in us to criticise the recorders, though they differ greatly (and this will be evident from the above extracts) in their mode of treatment. But in a case like this the editorial hand might surely be shown with advantage, and none can doubt that in a few sentences Mr. Rye, had his scheme allowed it, would have been able to put the reader in possession of Mr. Wallace's general principles and general results, while the different recorders would still be left to show how those principles and those results affect their respective branches.

It is, perhaps premature to say that the excellent plan of giving an index to the genera and sub-genera recorded as new, and of marking those names that had been bestowed before, has yet had the wholesome disciplinary effect that was expected of it, but there are indications that such is the case. The index to last year's volume showed that *fifty-nine* preoccupied names, implicating *thirty-seven* authors, had been reintroduced to zoological literature in the year 1875. The present volume shows the corresponding numbers to be *thirty-six* and *twenty-eight*—a manifest improvement, though not quite so great as at first sight appears, since in 1875 nearly a *thousand* new genera or sub-genera were instituted, while in 1876 the number is only about *eight hundred and seventy*. No one has again sinned as M. Mulsant did on the last occasion, but it seems strange that so learned an entomologist as Dr. Leconte should now head the list of offenders with *four* homonyms, and we suspect this must

be due to a different reading of the laws of nomenclature which may obtain in America. Next to him come Messrs. Cope, Dybowski, Jacovleff,¹ Kirchenpauer, Linstow and Snellen with *two* each, and the rest with one. The selection of the same name, *Coptingis*, for two apparently distinct genera of *Erotylidae* by M. Chapuis and the late Mr. G. R. Crotch, is curious, and the Arachnid *Corynethrix* of Dr. Koch, and the Thysanurous *Corynothrix* of Herr Tullberg seem to clash with one another. Collisions of this kind are, of course, unavoidable, but of the three dozen homonyms which come into the crop of 1876, a score-and-a-half might certainly have been avoided had their authors but followed the advice of Mr. Rye's motto:—

"Explore solum: sic fit via certior ultra."

That is to say had they consulted their Agassiz's *Nomenclator* and used the *Zoological Record*.

It remains for us to say that the present volume contains an abstract of the zoological portion of more than two hundred-and-fifty distinct periodicals, besides separately published works, and that those journals hold a good deal hardly any one requires to be told. Nevertheless, it may be new to some of our readers to learn that papers which have appeared in the older volumes of many of these periodicals are in so much request that lists of them, with the proper pagination, are being reprinted. This has been done in the *Deutsche entomologische Zeitschrift*, by Herren von Heyden and F. Blücher, with regard to the entomological articles in the first sixteen volumes of *Der zoologische Garten*, the first thirteen of the *Verhandlungen des naturforschenden Vereines in Brünn*, four volumes of the *Bulletin de la Société des Naturalistes de Moscou*, and fourteen of the *Archiv für Naturgeschichte*. Trusting that next year we may be able to congratulate Mr. Rye and his fellow-labourers on having a more promising prospect before them, we bid them be of good cheer, for they have the sympathies of all who know how to appreciate hard and honest work.

OUR BOOK SHELF

Annual Report and Transactions of the Plymouth Institution and Devon and Cornwall Natural History Society. Vol. VI. Part II. 1877-78. (Plymouth: Bredon and Son.)

THIS Report seems to us to deserve more than the passing notice we gave it in a recent note on the Reports of provincial societies. The society embraces a wide range of work—science, history, archæology—and many of the papers which it publishes will compare favourably with papers of a similar class read in metropolitan societies. The society has a large membership, and valuable collections in various departments. In the Report before us the president, Prof. Anthony, discusses various interesting points in connection with the doctrine of evolution, and although he holds the theory to be "not proven," his discussion of the subject is fair. Mr. R. N. Worth, a great authority on most subjects connected with Plymouth, has papers on "The Palæontology of Plymouth," "The Early Commerce of Plymouth," a paper of much interest showing considerable research, and "The Ancient Heraldry of Plymouth." Mr. R. Briggs's paper on "The Hedgerows

¹ It is much to be wished that there were some recognised way of rendering Russian proper names into the languages of Western Europe. Germans, Frenchmen, and Italians, each render them phonetically, and of course the name is differently spelled according to the nation of the writer. Mr. Jacovleff's name thus appears also as Jakowleff, Yakowleff, and Jacovley!